United Nations A/57/519

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 October 2002

Original: English

Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 75

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Rapporteur: Mr. Andrej **Droba** (Slovakia)

I. Introduction

1. At its 19th plenary meeting, on 20 September 2002, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-seventh session the item entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee considered the item at its 1st and 7th to 9th meetings, on 23 September and from 7 to 9 October 2002, and held a general debate on the item at its 7th to 9th meetings, from 7 to 9 October (see A/C.4/57/SR.1 and 7-9).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;[1]

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/57/213);

(c) Letter dated 14 June 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the Declaration signed in St. Petersburg on 7 June 2002 by the heads of State of the members of the Shanghai Cooperative Organization (A/57/88-S/2002/672).

4. At its 1st meeting, on 26 September 2002, the Committee decided to establish an open-ended Working Group on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, to be chaired by the delegation of Chile, to prepare the draft resolution on the item.

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/57/20).

02-65112 (E) 111102

5. At the 7th meeting, on 7 October, the Chairman of the Fourth Committee made an introductory statement (see A/C.4/57/SR.7).

6. At the same meeting, the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space introduced the reports referred to in paragraph 3 above (see A/C.4/57/SR.7).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.4/57/L.5

7. At the 9th meeting, on 9 October, the representative of Chile, on behalf of the Working Group, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" (A/C.4/57/L.5).

8. At the same meeting, following a statement by the Chairman, the Committee decided to waive rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and to take action on the draft resolution (see A/C.4/57/SR.9).

9. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.4/57/L.5 without a vote (see para. 11).

10. After the adoption of the draft resolution, statements were made by the representatives of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Algeria (see A/C.4/57/SR.9).

III. Recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

11. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996, 54/68 of 6 December 1999 and 56/51 of 10 December 2001,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet emerging new challenges,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing

the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies,[2]

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of further developing the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in this field,

Convinced of the importance of the recommendations in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999,[3]

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III,[4]

Convinced that the use of space science and technology and their applications, in such areas as telemedicine, tele-education and Earth observation, contribute to achieving the objectives of the global conferences of the United Nations that address various aspects of economic, social and cultural development, inter alia, poverty eradication,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-fifth session,[5]

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-fifth session;[5]

2. *Urges* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space[6] to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties as well as incorporating them in their national legislation;

---

[2] Resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

[3] See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

[4] A/57/213.

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/57/20).

[6] Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 34/68, annex).

3. *Notes* that, at its forty-first session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/51;[7]

4. *Notes with satisfaction* the successful completion of the three-year work plan[8] by the Working Group of the Legal Subcommittee concerning the review of the concept of the "launching State" and takes note of its recommendations;[9]

5. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-second session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(a) Consider the following as regular agenda items:

(i) General exchange of views;

(ii) Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space;

(iii) Information on the activities of international organizations relating to space law;

(iv) Matters relating to:

a. The definition and delimitation of outer space;

b. The character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;

(b) Consider the following single issues items for discussion:

(i) Review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;[10]

(ii) Examination of the preliminary draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, opened for signature at Cape Town, South Africa, on 16 November 2001:

a. Considerations relating to the possibility of the United Nations serving as supervisory authority under the preliminary draft protocol;

b. Considerations relating to the relationship between the terms of the preliminary draft protocol and the rights and obligations of States under the legal regime applicable to outer space;

6. *Notes* that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-second session, will submit its proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered by the Subcommittee at its forty-third session, in 2004;

7. *Notes also* that, in the context of paragraph 5 (a) (ii) above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its working group, which will meet for three years,

---

[7] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/57/20), chap. II.D.

[8] Ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20* and corrigendum (A/54/20 and Corr.1), annex I, para. 3 (b) (iii).

[9] Ibid., *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/57/20), para. 169.

[10] See resolution 47/68.

from 2002 to 2004, with the terms of reference as agreed upon by the Legal Subcommittee;[11]

8. *Notes further* that, in the context of paragraph 5 (a) (iii) above, the group of experts designated by interested Member States to identify which aspects of the report on the ethics of space policy of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization might need to be studied by the Committee and to draft a report, in consultation with other international organizations and in close liaison with the World Commission, will submit its report to the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-second session;

9. *Notes* that, in the context of paragraph 5 (a) (iv) above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its working group on the item only to consider matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space;

10. *Notes with appreciation* that, in the context of paragraph 5 (b) (ii) above, the Governments of France and Italy hosted the intersessional meetings within the framework of the ad hoc consultative mechanism established in accordance with paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 56/51;

11. *Agrees* that the Legal Subcommittee should establish a working group to consider the questions reflected in subparagraphs 5 (b) (ii) a and b above separately;

12. *Notes* that, in accordance with the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,[12] which were endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 11 of its resolution 52/56 of 10 December 1997, the Committee, at its forty-fifth session, considered the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the third term, starting in 2003, and held informal consultations on the matter;

13. *Notes also* that, in accordance with the agreement of the Committee at its forty-fifth session,[13] the Government of Austria convened and facilitated and will continue to convene and facilitate intersessional informal consultations, including the chairpersons of the regional groups, on the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the third term with a view to reaching consensus before the forty-sixth session of the Committee;

14. *Agrees* that, on the basis of agreements to be reached among the members of the Committee on the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the third term, the election of the officers of the Committee for the third term should be conducted at the beginning of the forty-sixth session of the Committee;

15. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its thirty-ninth session, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/51;[14]

---

[11] See A/AC.105/763 and Corr.1, para. 118, and A/AC.105/787, para. 138.

[12] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/52/20), annex I.

[13] Ibid., *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/57/20), para. 209.

[14] Ibid., chap. II.C.

16. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fortieth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(a) Consider the following items:

(i) General exchange of views and introduction to reports submitted on national activities;

(ii) United Nations Programme on Space Applications;

(iii) Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III);

(iv) Matters relating to remote-sensing of the Earth by satellite, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth's environment;

(b) Consider the following items in accordance with the work plans adopted by the Committee:[15]

(i) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space;

(ii) Means and mechanisms for strengthening inter-agency cooperation and increasing the use of space applications and services within and among entities of the United Nations system;

(iii) Implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system;

(iv) Space debris;

(c) Consider the following single issues items for discussion:

(i) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to developments in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;

(ii) Mobilization of financial resources to develop capacity in space science and technology applications;

(iii) The use of space technology for the medical sciences and public health;

17. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fortieth session will submit its proposal to the Committee for a draft provisional agenda for the forty-first session of the Subcommittee, in 2004;

18. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation, in liaison with member States, be invited to arrange a symposium on applications of satellite navigation and their benefits to developing countries, with as wide a participation as

[15] See A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, annex III, appendix, for the work plan for item (i); A/AC.105/736, annex II, paras. 40 and 41, for items (ii) and (iii), respectively; and A/AC.105/761, para. 130, for item (iv).

possible, to be held during the first week of the fortieth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee;

19. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraphs 16 (a) (ii) and (iii) and 17 above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fortieth session should reconvene the Working Group of the Whole;

20. *Also agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 16 (b) (i) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its fortieth session should reconvene its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;

21. *Invites* the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to contribute to the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in the context of paragraph 16 (b) (ii) above, and agrees that the Inter-Agency Meeting should continue to report to the Subcommittee and the Committee on the work conducted at its annual session;

22. *Endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2003, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications;[16]

23. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the African regional centres for space science and technology education, in the French language and in the English language, located in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, and the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific continued their education programmes in 2002 and that progress has been achieved in furthering the goals of the Network of Space Science and Technology Education and Research Institutions of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and in establishing the regional centres for space science and technology education in Latin America and the Caribbean, as a result of the substantive progress achieved during the meetings held in Mexico and Brazil in 2002, as well as Western Asia;

24. *Recognizes* the agreement reached at the Space Conferences of the Americas for the Latin American countries as a mechanism to promote cooperation and coordination in space activities in the region, notes with satisfaction the success of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, held at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 14 to 17 May 2002, which adopted the Declaration of Cartagena de Indias and the Plan of Action,[17] and encourages other regions to convene periodically regional conferences with a view to achieving convergence of positions on issues of common concern in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space among States Members of the United Nations;

25. *Urges* all Governments, entities of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental entities conducting space-related activities to take the necessary action for the effective implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, in particular its resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",[3] and requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;

---

[16] See A/AC.105/773, sects. II-IV.

[17] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/57/20), annex II.

26. *Notes with satisfaction* the work conducted by the eleven action teams that the Committee had established at its forty-fourth session under the voluntary leadership of Member States to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III, and agrees that Member States should provide full support to the action teams in conducting their work;[18]

27. *Agrees* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 55/122, the Committee should include in the agendas of its forty-sixth to forty-seventh sessions an item on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;

28. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Committee has started to prepare a report under the agenda item on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III for submission to the General Assembly, so that the Assembly may review and appraise, at its fifty-ninth session, in 2004, in accordance with paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 54/68, the implementation of the outcome of UNISPACE III and consider further actions and initiatives, and agrees that, in this context, the working group established by the Committee to prepare the above-mentioned report should be reconvened at the forty-sixth session of the Committee;

29. *Agrees* that the review by the General Assembly of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III should be conducted in plenary meetings at the fifty-ninth session of the Assembly, under a separate agenda item entitled "Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space", in addition to the item entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space";

30. *Urges* all Member States to contribute to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to support activities to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III, in particular the priority project proposals as recommended by the Committee at its forty-third session;[19]

31. *Recommends* that more attention be paid and political support be provided to all matters relating to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment;

32. *Considers* that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

33. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an

[18] Ibid., *Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* and corrigendum (A/56/20 and Corr.1), paras. 50 and 55; and ibid., *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/57/20), paras. 42 and 43.

[19] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/55/20), para. 87.

essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

34. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in the developing countries;

35. *Agrees* that the benefits of space technology and its applications should be prominently brought to the attention of conferences organized within the United Nations system to address global issues relating to social, economic and cultural development and that the use of space technology should be promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[20]

36. *Notes* that the Government of Chile has offered to host an international conference on biotechnology in 2003 to promote the use of space technology in enhancing food security, as part of contributions to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration;

37. *Notes with satisfaction* the efforts made by the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to bring the benefits of space science and technology and their applications to the attention of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

38. *Urges* entities of the United Nations system, particularly those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, to examine, in cooperation with the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to the implementation of the Political Declaration[21] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;[22]

39. *Takes note* of Algeria's interest in and contributions to the work of the Committee and of its request to become a member of the Committee, as well as of the support for that request expressed by the Group of 77 and other regional groups and Member States, and decides, on an exceptional basis, to accept its membership in accordance with paragraph 41 of General Assembly resolution 56/51;

40. *Welcomes* the interest of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in membership in the Committee and the endorsement of its candidature by the Group of African States, and requests the Committee to continue the consideration of the matter constructively during its next session, taking into account the principle of consensus;

41. *Endorses* the decision of the Committee to grant permanent observer status to the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites and to the Spaceweek International Association;

---

[20] See resolution 55/2.

[21] A/CONF.199/20, chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[22] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

42. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session;

43. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-sixth session, the item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status";

44. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-sixth session, the item entitled "Space and society";

45. *Commends* the achievements of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue during its twenty years of service to the global community by using space technology to assist aviators and mariners in distress around the globe;

46. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider a report on the activities of the System as a part of its consideration of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications under the item entitled "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee", and invites Member States to report on their activities regarding the System;

47. *Invites* the Committee to expand the scope of international cooperation relating to the social, economic, ethical and human dimension in space science and technology applications;

48. *Requests* the specialized agencies and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with progress reports on their work relating to the peaceful uses of outer space;

49. *Requests* the Committee to consider and identify new mechanisms of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, in accordance with the preamble to the present resolution, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future.